

# Businessman and Politician in Mexican California



*Pio Pico and what are believed to be his wife María Ygnacia Alvarado, his niece Trinidad de la Guerra and his wife's niece Margarita Alvarado.*

Pio Pico's rise from poverty to one of the wealthiest men in Alta California is remarkable. His family was one of many poor families from Sinaloa, Mexico who migrated to Alta California in 1775 to help colonize this remote territory. When his father died in 1819, Pico had no money or land. He opened a general store in San Diego. This business brought Pico into contact with some of the wealthiest and most influential people in California, and he quickly prospered. In 1823, he built a ten-room house in San Diego for his mother and launched his political career.

Pico was elected to the diputación in 1826, an advisory legislature to the governor of Alta California. He served on the diputación for 19 years, led political revolts against 3 governors, tried unsuccessfully to move the capital from Monterey to Los Angeles, and in 1832 served as interim governor. His political career peaked in 1845 when he was appointed governor of Alta California. In September of 1846 he went to Mexico to ask for assistance to fight the war against the United States.



*Battle of San Pasqual, December 6, 1846*